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ABSTRACT

Emotional intelligence (EI) can be a diagnostic tool and a set of guiding principals to address the learning organization's concern of overcoming the barriers to collective learning. EI can be defined as "how well you handle yourself." It refers to "emotional literacy" and a person's capacity to manage emotions and use them as a resource. This is done by knowing one's emotions; managing emotions; motivating oneself; recognizing emotions in others; and handling relationships. The learning organization has emotional underpinnings in that it directly addresses the barriers to such things as collective learning and shared visions. EI has the potential to be a diagnostic tool to assess the 'emotional climate' of the broader organization and the development of specific persons within the organization. There is debate as to whether EI can be measured. Issues with the use of EI as a diagnostic tool include the tendency to take the individual as the unit of analysis, thus ignoring social factors and collective dynamics. EI addresses real workplace issues, it has the potential to guide the management of workplace relationships, remove barriers to collaboration, and manage workplace diversity. (Contains 10 references.) (SLR)

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The Learning Organisation Part II "Getting Emotional" The Learning Organisation and Emotional Intelligence

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Abstract

This paper explores the links between concepts of the learning organisation and emotional intelligence. Many arguments relating to the learning organisation, particularly those of the influential writer Peter Senge, propose that the practitioner needs to take seriously the relational dynamics of people in the workplace in order, effectively, to remove some of the 'barriers' to collective learning. To some extent, the growing interest in emotional intelligence can be understood as a continuation of this theme. This paper explores the potential for emotional intelligence to be used as a set of tools and ideas to achieve some of the ideals of the learning organisation. The paper provides an exposition of key emotional intelligence concepts, and considers case study material in assessing the utility of these concepts for the human resource development practitioner. The paper concludes by considering how the growing interest in emotional intelligence might signal a shift in the character of organisational life in years to come.

Introduction[1]

The concept of the learning organisation spans a radical set of ideas. At its heart lies the proposition that organisations should fundamentally rethink their goals, and, perhaps, their whole purpose for existing. Peter Senge (1990) (a key proponent of the learning organisation), in particular, posits the radically humanist idea that organisations should become places where people can begin to *realise their highest aspirations*. He talks of developing worker *commitment* not *compliance*; of building *shared* visions, not imposing a mission statement from above; of effectively reconciling individual and organisational objectives.

Right at the centre of the concept of the learning organisation is the idea of *collective learning* itself. If we are to believe the literature, collective learning is likely to constitute *the* key source of competitive advantage within a rapidly changing global market. What Senge and other similar writers point towards is the need to develop a culture of continuous development. To do so, they argue, practitioners must place human relationships at the centre of their analyses and strategic interventions.

A key theme in 'making the learning organisation happen' is that of the need to remove the barriers to collective learning: removing, for example, people's personal defensiveness, their animosity towards one another, the hostility between different groups within the organisation, and so on. The question then arises as to *how* do we make this happen? Is it, indeed, possible to negotiate a way through a potential minefield of office politics, of personal agendas and insecurities, of deeply ingrained conflicts that might stand in the way of creating an organisation that learns? It is in this connection that emotional intelligence links most closely to the ideas relating to the learning organisation, and, accordingly, has a great deal to offer the practitioner.

Emotional intelligence can be understood both as a diagnostic tool and a set of guiding principles which the practitioner can employ to address the central concern of overcoming the barriers to collective learning. From an emotional intelligence perspective, it is the 'emotional climate' of an organisation that is likely to be the most important factor in determining its success in becoming a learning organisation, and, ultimately, to be the key to its long-term survival. As Tran (1998) argues:

> ...the emotional climate deeply affects organisational dynamics such as idea-generation and creativity, readiness and adaptability to change, and facilitation of learning processes ... Hence it influences performance, both individual and organisational ... There are strong signs that suggest the future of all corporate life: a tomorrow where the basic skills of emotional intelligence will be ever more important, in teamwork, in co-operation, in helping people to learn together how to work more effectively. As knowledge-based services and intellectual capital become more central to corporations, improving the way people work together will be a major way to leverage intellectual capital, making a critical competitive difference. To thrive, if not survive, corporations would do well to boost their collective emotional intelligence (Tran 1998: 102).

Both the concept of the learning organisation and the ideas relating to emotional intelligence can, therefore, be understood to be related to a kind of neo-human relations[2] (Langley 2000) movement in the

1 An earlier version of this paper was given at the Foundation for Human Resource Development annual conference in Malta, November, 2000.

2 By this I am referring to a renewed emphasis on human relationships as central to analyses of work.

academic and practitioner literature: an increasingly pervasive trend which stresses the importance of human relationships—and the knowledge and innovations embedded within these—as sources of competitive advantage.

In the remainder of this paper I shall outline in more detail what the concept of emotional intelligence actually means. I will explore the potential for emotional intelligence to be used as a diagnostic tool to identify the barriers to collective learning, to 'uncover mental models', and to underpin workplace collaboration. I shall argue that emotional intelligence does indeed have something to offer the practitioner who wants to develop a learning organisation. However, it will be my contention that there are a number of problems with how these ideas have been 'operationalised', particularly in relation to the issue of *measuring* emotional intelligence.

What is Emotional Intelligence?

Emotional intelligence is, in part, a reaction against the dominance of conventional understandings of intelligence: in particular the 'IQ' model. This is particularly evident from the very title of Daniel Goleman's (1996) text *Emotional Intelligence: why it can matter more than IQ*. Goleman (perhaps the most influential author on the subject) proposes that IQ might, at best, contribute: '...about 20 percent to the factors that determine life success, which leaves 80 percent to other forces' (1996: 34). It is this other eighty percent of factors that Goleman wants to explore.

In essence, emotional intelligence can be defined as 'how well you handle yourself'. It refers to the extent of our 'emotional literacy': our ability to recognise our own emotions and those of others. It relates to a person's capacity both to manage emotions and to draw upon these as a resource. As Aristotle puts it: "Anyone can become angry—that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way—that is not easy" (Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics* in Goleman 1996: ix). Goleman argues that it is precisely these kinds of capacities that are not detected by conventional models of intelligence, and yet these matter fundamentally to our life success.

To develop this point, Goleman provides the example of Judy, a four year old girl who is observed playing with her classmates. She displays a profound understanding of classroom 'politics': she knows who in her class likes to play with whom—she knows with great accuracy the corner of the room in which each child in her class prefers to play. She has, Goleman suggests a 'perfect social map' of her class. Judy displays very early signs of high emotional intelligence. Her propensity for reading the social landscape of her class might make her a star in later life in any career where people skills are of fundamental importance: in a range of careers from diplomacy to sales management. Goleman states:

> And that is the problem: academic intelligence offers virtually no preparation for the turmoil—or opportunity—life's vicissitudes bring. Yet even though a high IQ is no guarantee of prosperity, prestige, or happiness in life, our schools and our culture fixate on academic abilities, ignoring *emotional* intelligence, a set of traits—some might call it character—that also matters immensely for our personal destiny. Emotional life is a domain that, as surely as math or reading, can be handled with greater or lesser skill, and requires its unique set of competencies. And how adept a person is at those is crucial to understanding why one person thrives in life while another, of equal intellect, dead-ends: emotional aptitude is a *meta-ability*, determining how well we can use whatever other skills we have, including raw intellect (1996: 36).

Goleman is, therefore, not suggesting that we should altogether dispense with IQ models of intelligence, but rather, that we should recognise multiple forms of intelligence. Goleman is promoting a more holistic

model of intelligence, one which goes beyond the rather narrow definition contained within the IQ tradition.

What distinguishes the work on emotional intelligence from many of the 'practitioner fads' which seem to dominate a great deal of the human resource development literature is that it is based upon quite extensive academic research. Specifically, Goleman argues that emotional intelligence stems from a part of the brain different from that of IQ. Goleman draws upon recent physiological evidence to support his case, in particular new research into the role of the amygdala[3] in brain functioning by LeDoux (1986, 1992) among others.

Fortunately, unlike IQ which is seen to be fixed and immutable from birth, emotional intelligence is understood to be something that can be developed. Outlined below is Goleman's five part domain model to explain 'how we can bring intelligence to our emotions' (1996: 42):

Knowing one's emotions

By this, Goleman refers to *self-awareness*: our capacity for recognising our own feelings and to be able to monitor these from moment to moment. Goleman proposes that an inability to notice our true feelings leaves us at their mercy. Accordingly, greater certainty about our feelings enables better steering of our lives and allows for greater confidence in personal decisions. It is here than we can observe a direct compatibility with Senge's (1990) concept of 'uncovering mental models'. Senge proposes that we need to uncover how we see and understand the world. Such a process involves a scrutiny of our patterns of thinking, our patterns of reacting to different situations, and an explication of these models. In a similar manner to Goleman, Senge proposes that such a process will allow us to remove the obstructions to 'learningful' conversations with one another—'conversations that balance inquiry and advocacy, where people expose their own thinking effectively and make that thinking open to the influence of others' (1990: 9).

Managing emotions

This idea builds on the domain of self-awareness: it involves us managing our feelings so that they are 'appropriate'. For example, controlling emotional 'outbursts': to be able to soothe ourselves at appropriate times; to be able to counter feelings of gloom, anxiety, irritability, etc. Poor emotion management, Goleman argues, can lead to constant distress and poor working relationships.

Motivating oneself

This involves 'Marshalling emotions in the service of a goal' (1996: 42). Being able to motivate ourselves, Goleman states, is in turn, dependent on emotional control. For example, the importance of being able to defer gratification in the pursuit of a goal; to be able to concentrate, to focus on the task in hand by stifling other impulses; being able to get into the 'flow' of work, etc. It is this key area, Goleman argues, that underlies individual productivity. Here we can observe how the idea of *motivating oneself* might facilitate Senge's idea of *personal mastery*—of being able consistently to realise personal objectives 'the results that matter most deeply to [us]' (1990: 7).

3 An almond-shaped brain region

Recognising emotions in others

By this, Goleman is referring to developing characteristics such as *empathy*, where we become more 'in tune' with the subtle social signals that indicate what others feel, need, or want. Once again, this involves the key domain of emotional self-awareness—it is, after all, only possible to recognise the emotions of others if we can recognise our own emotions. Goleman proposes that this is a fundamental 'people skill'. As we shall see, such a skill can be understood to be crucial to any endeavour of removing the barriers to collective learning.

Handling relationships

Handling relationships centres on the idea of being able to *manage the emotions of others*—our 'social competence'. We can observe how the domain of handling relationships in turn requires being able to recognise the emotions of others, and being able accurately to read social networks and face-to-face encounters. Goleman suggests that these are abilities crucial to leadership and personal effectiveness.

As can be observed from the above, there are complimentary links between the idea of 'bringing intelligence to your emotions' and some of the ideals of the learning organisation. I'd like now to consider in more detail how emotional intelligence might be used to underpin the development of a learning organisation through exploring the case of the Lincoln Continental redesign team in the USA.

The Emotional Underpinnings of the Learning Organisation

The case of the 1995 model Lincoln Continental (henceforth LC) redesign team is often cited as a classic success story for the ideas related to the learning organisation. However, Goleman (1998) uses this same case example to illustrate the more fundamental importance of issues relating to emotional intelligence in underpinning collaborative working, and, ultimately, organisational success.

Though its redesign began four months later than had been intended, the Lincoln Continental was available on the market one month ahead of schedule. Independent measures of customer satisfaction and production quality rated the LC better than every other car in its class (1998: 292).

A major cost for any automotive design team is that of 'retooling'. It is invariably the case that design teams have to modify and amend design specifications after the production of a first proto-type, whereby unanticipated flaws and problems become more readily apparent. As Goleman states "At this pointæonce hot metal has been poured to make a working modelæsuch reworking is quite expensive: The job requires redoing the machine tooling for every part involved, typically at costs of millions of dollars" (1998: 292). Perhaps most impressively of all, the LC re-design team completed their project using only a third of their budgeted $90 million for retooling. So, how did they achieve this?

The LC team were steered by a group of consultantsælnteractive Learning Labs (henceforth ILL)æversed in the methods of the learning organisation. The initial challenge for ILL was to convince the LC team that the only way to achieve the 'hard' results that they wanted (i.e. a better car in less than the normal development time) was to use 'soft' measures: to develop a culture of openness, mutual trust, collaborative learning, enhanced communications, and so on.

Steered by the advice of ILL, core management of the LC team began to employ classic learning organisation methods, most notably that of 'unlearning defensive habits of conversation' (1998: 292). As Goleman explains:

> The method is simple: Instead of arguing, the parties agree to mutually explore the assumptions that undergird their points of view. A classic example of how people jump to conclusions is when you see someone yawn in a meeting, leap to the assumption that he is bored, and then skip to the more damaging overgeneralization that he doesn't care about the meeting, anyone else's thoughts, or the entire project. So you tell him, "I'm disappointed in you". In this learning organization method, that comment gets listed under a heading: "What Was Said or Done". The more critical data, though, is in another column, "Unspoken Thoughts and Feelings": that the yawn meant he was bored and doesn't care about the meeting, anyone else or even the entire project. In that column, too, go our own feelings of hurt and anger. Once these hidden assumptions surface, they can be tested against reality by talking about them. For instance, we may discover the yawn was not from boredom but rather exhaustion due to getting up in the night with a cranky infant (1998: 292—3).

For Goleman, this actually demonstrates a more fundamental engagement with the *emotional* level of exchanges in the organisation. For this exercise to work with any degree of effectiveness, it required: *self-awareness* to be able to retrieve the underlying feelings and unspoken thoughts; *empathy*, to be able to comprehend other people's points of view; and *social skills* to be able to deal effectively with the emotionally-charged outcomes of such exchanges. Goleman notes that it is these 'internal emotional dialogues' that can matter most in the workplace as they lie at the route of all conflicts, and yet we tend to discard these as though they were 'toxic waste'. It is only, he proposes, through unveiling and addressing this deep level of emotional dialogue that we can begin to engage in real collaboration.

Indeed, with the case of the LC project team, this process of unveiling hidden emotional dialogue revealed two diametrically opposed 'camps'. Those in control of finance were convinced that the programme managers were oblivious to cost control, and those in charge of the programme felt that the finance managers had no idea of what was involved in the automotive development process. Crucially, this had lead to a situation in which:

- Fear of being wrong led people to withhold information.
- The bosses' need to control got in the way of people on the team using their best capabilities.
- Suspicion was widespread—people saw each other as unhelpful and not to be trusted (1998: 294).

To overcome this situation, Goleman proposes, took a great deal of 'social engineering'. He explains:

> ... the three-hundred-person design team was brought together in groups of twenty to work on the real problems they faced together on the job, such as reconfiguring the interior of the car. As they talked through their problems, facilitators ... taught them the basic conceptual tools of collaborative learning. But the key was, as Zeniuk [the director of ILL] puts it, "emotional awareness, empathy, and building relationships. Fostering emotional intelligence wasn't a direct goal, but evolved naturally as we tried to reach our goals" (1998: 294æ295).

Goleman explains that it was through enhancing the collective emotional intelligence of the LC team—in particular, their self-awareness—that they were able to make the huge savings on retooling costs, and were able to reduce dramatically the time taken to put the redesigned car on to the market. Specifically, it was discovered that engineers within the project team were reluctant to report design flaws and potential errors because of a fear of embarrassment and possible recriminations. This meant that mistakes would invariably be uncovered at stages in the development process where they were more costly to put right. As the ILL director explains "If I make a design mistake in sheet metal and then have to go back and retool to correct

it, that can cost nine million dollars ... But if I spot the mistake before I get to the sheet metal—tooling stage, it costs nothing to fix. If something's not going to work, we need the bad news early" (cited in Goleman 1998: 295).

In order to facilitate the change required to overcome this problem, the project team had to learn to approach meetings in a much more open way, whereby management did not proceed from the starting point that they already had the answers, where meeting participants were encouraged to reflect upon their discomfort or unease with any particular decision. As the ILL director explains "There is a high probability that there was a reason for that discomfort, and that reason could frequently change the entire decision... It took a while for us to reach that level of honesty and openness". As a result: "We got seven hundred changes in specifications eighteen months before production, instead of the usual wave of costly changes at the very last minute" (cited in Goleman 1998: 296).

From the example above we can observe how it was emotional intelligence that was the key to collaboration within the LC team. Indeed, the case of the LC team provides an excellent practical example of the complimentary links between the learning organisation and emotional intelligence. However, crucially it demonstrates a more general point that has been central to my argument in this paper: where the learning organisation characteristically provides the practitioner with a series of aspirations such as collective learning, shared visions, etc., emotional intelligence focuses directly on the potential barriers, the psychological and emotional complexity that must be addressed in order to fulfil these ideals. While, in the case of the LC team, enhanced levels of collective emotional intelligence were seen to arise almost 'accidentally' as a result of pursuing methods related to the development of a learning organisation, we can see by turning this relationship on its head, so to speak, how emotional intelligence has a great deal to offer the learning organisation practitioner. That is to say, in taking as its starting point the evidently crucial emotional level to human relationships, the ideas relating to emotional intelligence—such as the guidelines on bringing intelligence to our emotions—can be understood to constitute a new toolbox for practitioners developing learning organisations. Moreover, it is in this way that emotional intelligence can help to address some of the main criticisms of the learning organisation: that the concept is too abstract, and that not enough has been undertaken to provide practitioners with appropriate methods and techniques with which to realise the ideals it champions.

Emotional Intelligence as a Diagnostic Tool

Emotional intelligence can thus be understood to have utility in directly informing the strategic interventions of the learning organisation practitioner. The case of the LC team highlights, more specifically, the potential for emotional intelligence to have a role as a diagnostic tool. As such, emotional intelligence might be employed at two levels: firstly at the broader organisational level in assessing the 'emotional climate' (Tran 1998) of an organisation in order to elucidate its capacity to inhibit or enhance collective learning; and secondly at the individual level in order to guide the development of specific persons within the organisation.

To consider the first of these levels: an organisation's *emotional climate* is "...the central key element of organisational life... it is where everything gets played out: power games, contempt, envy, despair, but also joy, pleasure, interest, enthusiasm" (Tran 1998: 101). A group of researchers—the Geneva Emotion Research Group (based at the University of Geneva)—are currently developing an instrument with which

to measure emotional climate (Tran 1998: 102). The instrument is beginning to take the form of an 'emotional map'—a kind of 'spectrum' of emotional states split into four segments as shown in Figure 1:

Figure 1

(Adapted from Tran 1998: 102)

Through drawing upon a range of methodologies, such as interviews, questionnaires, group workshops, the Geneva group hope to be able to map out the pervasive emotional states in an organisation. The group propose that emotional climate is influenced by a '...group dynamics phenomenon, such as conformity (or non-conformity), influence, emotional contagion and emotional modulation ... the emotional climate becomes qualitatively and quantitatively different, precisely because of shared emotional episodes, moods, values, beliefs and goals' (Tran 1998: 102). That is to say, an organisation's emotional climate grows out of a complex of inter-relationships, whereby people influence each other's mood states. For example, a pervasive feeling of gloom might spread rapidly within an organisation: passed from one person to the next through the character of their face-to-face encounters. The Geneva group's work can, therefore, be understood as an attempt to develop an instrument that measures *collective* emotional intelligence. However, the work of the Geneva group and similar researchers is still at a relatively early stage of development. By contrast, a great deal more work has been undertaken in relation to the second area identified above, that is, the measurement of *individual* emotional intelligence.

Measuring Emotional Intelligence

There is considerable debate as to whether emotional intelligence is something that can be measured, particularly through using existing methodologies. Nonetheless, a whole industry involved in the development of assessment tools has latched on to the concept. A range of existing tests of personality, aptitude and competence have been amended in attempts to incorporate some of the key principles involved with emotional intelligence, often in ways profoundly at odds with the original ideas espoused by writers such as Goleman. A whole array of new assessment tools has also emerged. I'd like now to examine some of these tools in more detail.

Perhaps the best place to start in considering how emotional intelligence can be measured is to consider an 'ideal type' model of the emotionally intelligent person. Such a model would be useful as a standard against which we might measure ourselves or other people. In this connection, Goleman (1996: 44—5) draws upon the work of Jack Block (a psychologist at the University of California at Berkeley) who provides descriptions of the 'IQ pure type' and the 'EI pure type'. The types are further divided according to gender, such that we are presented with a four section classificatory model as outlined below:

IQ pure type, Male

The male IQ pure type is a caricature of the academic. He excels in thought and endeavours of the mind, but is impoverished in understanding feelings and his personal life. He has a wide range of intellectual interests and abilities. He is productive and ambitious, but is often "...critical and condescending, fastidious and inhibited, uneasy with sexuality and sensual experience, unexpressive and detached, and emotionally bland and cold" (1996: 45).

EI pure type, Male

The male EI (emotionally intelligent) pure type, by contrast, is usually cheerful. He is not prone to worry. He is ethical, sympathetic, and caring. His emotional life is rich, but 'appropriate': he is comfortable with himself.

IQ pure type, Female
The female IQ pure type is articulate, confident and intellectual. She has a wide range of interests, but is introspective; she is hesitant to express her anger openly (though she often does so indirectly).

EI pure type, Female
By contrast, the female EI pure type is assertive, good at expressing feelings directly, positive, outgoing and gregarious. She does not express feelings through outbursts. She is open to new experiences. '[U]nlike the women purely high in IQ, they rarely feel anxious or guilty, or sink into rumination' (1996: 45).

Goleman notes that these ideal types should be taken very much as constructions to serve didactic purposes. Goleman is not, of course, suggesting that there are simply four types of people. Instead he argues that all of us are mixes of IQ and EI. However, '...emotional intelligence adds far more of the qualities that make us more fully human' (1998: 45).

Beyond sketching out these ideal type models, Goleman does not go much further in developing an instrument with which to measure emotional intelligence. It is evident, however, that such ideal types of emotional intelligence together with Goleman's five part model of 'how we can bring intelligence to our emotions' have informed many of the newly developed measures of emotional intelligence. Most interestingly, such measures are being employed as a set of desiderata of personal characteristics to guide development activities.

A particularly useful illustration of this trend is provided by Andrew Langley (Langley 2000). Langley wanted to find out whether emotional intelligence might be a useful 'yardstick' for measuring the 'promotional readiness' of middle managers in a global manufacturing corporation. Furthermore, he proposes, 'If the personal attributes and social abilities that reflect high emotional intelligence can be understood and assessed, then not only do we gain a new perspective on management development but steps can be taken to develop people's potential' (2000: 177).

Senior and middle managers were asked to assess themselves against definitions on a four point Likert scale of emotional competencies which, to a large degree, were based on the previously discussed work of Goleman and similar others. The competencies were further split according to those which were 'personal' and those which were 'social'.

In the *personal* category of emotional competencies Langley found the most statistically significant differences between middle managers and senior managers related to three main areas: emotional awareness, innovation and commitment.

Emotional Awareness
Research findings suggested that senior managers were more in control of their emotional states, and less inclined to be emotionally reactive than their middle manager counterparts.

Innovation
Langley found that senior managers showed more signs of being 'open to novel ideas and approaches, and being flexible in responding to change' (2000: 179) than middle managers.

Commitment
Commitment was defined as 'aligning with the goals of a group or organisation' (2000:179). Once again, Langley found that senior managers scored much higher against this competence than did their middle-manager counterparts.

In the *social* category of emotional competencies Langley found the most statistically significant differences between middle managers and senior managers related to four main areas: political awareness, leadership, change catalyst, team capabilities.

Political Awareness
Langley found that senior managers felt more able to 'read social and political currents'. The findings suggest, Langley argues, '...a lack of general business or strategic awareness among the middle managers' (2000: 180).

Leadership
Leadership skill was defined as the capacity for '... inspiring and guiding individuals and groups' (2000: 180). Leadership was, in turn, seen to be related to 'the ability [of managers] to read the impact of their own actions on the subtle undercurrents of a group and reflect back these group feelings to demonstrate that they can be understood'. Again, it was senior managers who displayed much higher levels of this emotional competency.

Change catalyst
Senior managers were found to have much more capacity for '...initiating or managing changeæeffective change leaders have high levels of influence, commitment, motivation, initiative and optimism, as well as the instinct for organisational politics' (2000: 180).

Team Capabilities
Team capabilities referred to the capacity for '...creating group synergy in pursuing collective goals' (2000: 180): forging the conflict of groups into productive outcomes. Once again, it was senior managers who were found to have higher levels of this emotional competency.

Langley's intention needs to be made clear. He wanted first to identify those areas in which the greatest differences between senior and middle managers could be observed, and then to use these as a benchmark: to identify those middle managers who more closely approximated the characteristics of senior managers and to decide upon programmes of development and/or promotional choices accordingly. It is evident that, as suggested above, Langley's measures of emotional competence were significantly informed by the work of Goleman and other similar writers. For example, the idea of emotional awareness parallels closely Goleman's domain area of *managing emotions*, with its stress on *self-awareness*. Similarly, *political awareness* closely parallels Goleman's areas of *recognising emotions in others*, and *handling relationships*.

Problems with Emotional Intelligence Measures

While the above example highlights some of the potential uses of EI as a diagnostic tool, it also highlights some significant problems, at least in terms of how the ideas are being *applied* by practitioners in the workplace.

Langley himself recognises that, to a degree, some of the competencies that were employed did more to measure environmental conditions than individual differences in emotional intelligence. For example, in relation to *commitment*—defined as 'aligning with the goals of a group or organisation'—it was hardly surprising that senior managers were found to have higher levels of commitment since they were actively involved in *setting* the goals of the organisation in question. In a similar manner, senior managers had an unfair advantage when it came to *reading the political landscape* of the organisation – they enjoyed a much better vantage point from which to do so. For example, senior managers would be privy to far more of the information about individual conflicts, private connections and confidential incidents than their middle manager counterparts. Or again, as Langley recognises, in relation to change management—the *opportunities* for 'initiating and managing change' would have been much higher for senior managers, they would have had much more scope to practice and develop these competencies.

Such concerns highlight a more general problem: that a pervasive tendency in writings on emotional intelligence is to take the 'individual' and the 'mind' as the unit of analysis. To return to Goleman's 80%æhis proposal that IQ contributes only 20% of where one ends up in life, leaving 80% to other factors—the difficulties with Langley's study highlight the importance of also considering *social* factors in explaining differences in peoples life chances and capabilities. Furthermore, it might be the case that the line between what is emotionally 'intelligent' or 'unintelligent' is not objectively drawn. It might simply reflect the business agenda of the day. Or, it might be culturally-specific.
Consider, for example, Langley's emotional competence of innovation as being '…open to novel ideas and approaches, and being flexible in responding to change'. The very well known research of Geert Hofstede (1981) reveals that 'openness to change' is a cultural variant. He argues that members of societies with, what he labels as, high levels of 'uncertainty avoidance' have a tendency to be more anxious, 'emotional' and aggressive, and are less likely to embrace the uncertainty brought about by change. Hofstede's research found Latin American, Mediterranean, and Latin European countries to have 'strong' uncertainty avoidance cultures. Conversely, societies with relatively 'weak' uncertainty avoidanceæthat is, those that are relatively 'secure' about the futureæsuch as Denmark, Sweden, Britain and Ireland, were found to be more comfortable with change, risk, and unpredictability. If we agree, for the moment at least, that Hofstede's research is broadly accurate, does this mean that there are some cultures that are more 'emotionally intelligent' than others? Such a proposition would be highly contentious. It is more likely that the reverse is the case: that what is labelled as 'emotionally intelligent' in fact reflects the broad value sets of a particular culture.

There are also a series of problems involved with using self-assessment methods in measuring emotional intelligence, both in Langley's study and as more general trend among practitioners employing the concepts. Consider, for example, Bagshaw's (2000: 61—2) emotional intelligence self-assessment test:

1. Are you aware of the subtleties of your own feelings?
2. Do you usually know what other people are feeling, even if they do not say so?
3. Does your awareness of what others are going through give you feelings of compassion for them?
4. Can you carry on doing the things you want to do under distressing circumstances, so they do not control your life?
5. When you are angry, can you still make your needs known in a way that resolves rather than exacerbates the situation?
6. Can you hang on to long-term goals, and avoid being too impulsive?

7. Do you keep trying to achieve what you want, even when it seems impossible and it is tempting to give up?
8. Can you use your feelings to help you to reach decisions in your life?

Bagshaw proposes that people who answer 'yes' to these questions are likely to have high levels of emotional intelligence. He acknowledges that this self-assessment test can only really measure the emotional intelligence of people who are already *self-aware* (people who are able to recognise and read their emotional states), and does not claim that this is an objective assessment. However, once again, this highlights the problem of taking the individual as the unit of analysis. Surely the answer to many of these questions would be 'it depends' rather than a simple yes or no? Moreover, surely my answer to each question 'would depend upon' the people around me; on the situation in which I found myself; on the broader environment—again indicating the fundamental importance of *social* context. For example, might our ability to recognise someone else's feelings depend on more than just intrinsic emphatic qualities: might it also depend on our recognising the culturally-mediated cues of emotional states? That is to say, might my capacity to recognise the feelings of someone within my family be much greater than, say, my capacity to read those of a stranger from a completely different socio-cultural environment? Self-assessment measures, such as that illustrated above, encourage just an introspective *individual* examination, whereas a far more appropriate measure of emotional intelligence would need to take seriously the broader *social* context.

This kind of self-assessment instrument is a far cry from the ideas set out by Goleman and his predecessors. However, like any relatively new set of ideas, there is a danger that emotional intelligence will be treated as 'just the latest fad' and implemented without any real understanding of the underpinning principles. Nonetheless, it is becoming more and more evident that the ideas relating to emotional intelligence have currency in the present-day workplace. As Hamel and Prahalad observed in 1991æsome time before the concept of EI had widely taken off:

> The rules of work are changing. We're being judged by a new yardstick: not just how smart we are, or by our training or expertise, but also by *how well we handle ourselves and each other*. This yardstick is increasingly applied in choosing who will be hired and who will not, who will be let go and who retained, who passed over and who promoted (Hamel and Prahalad, 1991 *my emphasis*).

In this sense, emotional intelligence can be seen to be responding to some very real issues of the present-day workplace. In the wake of the 'downsizing', 'rightsizing', 'delayering', and so on of the late 80s and early 90s, the issues of staff retention, career development, in other words, *people issues* are taking on increasing significance (Langley (2000: 177). Within this context, the ideas relating to emotional intelligence have grown in popularity at an exponential rate—in the last three years in particular. If the ideas are here to stay, in one form or anotheræand there's quite a lot of evidence to suggest that they areæwhat might this signal for the future of organisational life, and the role of the human resource development practitioner within this?

Emotional Intelligence: the Future of Organisational Life

At the extremes of possibility lie two possible futures. To use the language of emotions: a 'sad ending', and a 'happy ending'.

The Sad Ending

Consider the following lyrics taken from the 1997 *Radiohead* song 'Fitter Happier' from the album *OK Computer*:

Fitter, happier, more productive,
Comfortable,
Not drinking too much,
Regular exercise at the gym
Getting on better with your associate employee contemporaries,
At ease,
Eating well,
A patient better driver,
No paranoia,
Careful to all animals
(Never washing spiders down the plughole),
Keep in contact with old friends
(Enjoy a drink now and then),
Fond but not in love,
Will not cry in public...

(Please note, the lyrics have been edited for purposes of brevity).

In the recorded song, the lyrics are read by a monotone computer-generated voice. When interviewed about the meaning of the song, the author—Thom York—explained that the lyrics were like a 'check-list for the nineties'. York was describing a process in which more and more demands are being made on how we think and feel. He was describing 'emotional regimens' where we increasingly need to behave in an 'appropriate' way, at work, at home, in all spheres of social life. The question, then, emerges as to whether emotional intelligence—in the hands of practitioners—might signal ever-increasing demands for 'emotional correctness'. Indeed, there is an uncanny similarity between the lyrics from the *Radiohead* song and the definition of the 'EI Pure Type' cited earlier: 'Usually cheerful, not prone to worry, ethical, sympathetic, caring. Their emotional life is rich, but appropriate: comfortable with themselves'. Might emotional intelligence signal a future of organisational life in which the control of management is not just confined to what employees do, but to how they must *feel*, and to how they *express* their emotions?[4]

However, I hope to have shown that such a future would be fundamentally at odds with the key ideas of emotional intelligence. As Goleman states quite explicitly, his intention is most certainly not:

> ... to argue for making organizations a place where people simply bare their feelings or souls to each other, in some nightmarish vision of the office as a kind of emotional salon or ongoing sensitivity group. That would be utterly counterproductive, a blurring of the distinction between work and private life that itself signifies poor emotional competence (1998: 287).

Perhaps then, emotional intelligence will involve the reverse of the 'sad ending' outlined above, where, in fact, the renewed emphasis on human relationships would lead the workplace becoming 'a nicer place to live'. Such would be the 'happy ending':

The Happy Ending

Langley (2000) provides a range of fascinating speculations about the possible influence of the neo-human relations trend—embodied in the ideas relating to emotional intelligence and the learning organisation—on the future of work. He writes:

> Thus, the neo-human relations concept of employee growth and development could become a necessity [during this] century. Gaining knowledge and increasing personal satisfaction do not necessarily go hand in hand. The worker of the future may be "forced" to learn in order to compete and this may give rise to a whole new era of "entertaining training". The future role of the management trainer may not just be to codify and disseminate knowledge effectively but also to entertain ... [T]he manager's role becomes one of human psychologist and facilitator where he/she guides people to find their own learning and sense of purpose... [the manager would] ensure the knowledge is gained in an entertaining way that harmonises any conflict between an individual's and the organisation's goals. Training companies, consultants and business schools may be forced to compete on how pleasurable, innovative and entertaining their teaching methods are... (2000: 181–2).

Langley, therefore, points towards a future in which the role of the trainer and human resource development practitioner has changed fundamentally. His suggestion is that competitive pressures will force practitioners to take seriously the emotional life of the organisation. The result would be that the entertainment value of training packages, courses, and consultancy might emerge as a key source of competitive advantage. In such a future, management practitioners would need to have a high degree of 'emotional literacy' in order to guide employees towards fulfilling their aspirations in the workplace.

Conclusion

It is likely that neither the sad nor the happy ending, in the somewhat caricatured forms I have presented them here, realistically represents the future of organisational life. Nonetheless, each ending highlights a range of concerns that do need to be taken seriously. Indeed, I hope to have shown that emotional intelligence does in fact address very real workplace issues. It has the potential to inform the work of the practitioner in a number of ways, most particularly, in guiding the management of workplace relationships to remove the barriers to collaboration. It is in this connection that emotional intelligence has the most to contribute to the learning organisation practitioner, and indeed, to a broader range of enterprises such as that of managing workplace diversity.

I also hope to have shown that emotional intelligence should not be dismissed as simply one other passing fad, rather, it addresses an enduring set of issues that appear to have become increasingly important in the present-day workplace. While Goleman considers it to be emotionally incompetent to have blurred boundaries between private and working lives, this is, nonetheless, increasingly a reality for a growing proportion of today's workforce. Workers in the UK, in particular, are now working some of the longest hours in Europe. Some of the largest employers in London, for example, now provide automatic membership of top dating agencies as part of their joining packages. Perhaps this is a response to what happens when, increasingly, we begin to 'live our lives at work'? More specifically, perhaps this is a reaction to the range of potential problems involved with blurring the boundaries between our sexual and working lives? Moreover, as a set of ideas, emotional intelligence challenges received wisdom that decisions made in the workplace are somehow 'unclouded' by emotional concerns. It recognises that *all* decisions, actions, strategic interventions, exchanges, etc. in the workplace have an emotional level: a level that practitioners would ignore at their peril.

Nonetheless, I also hope to have demonstrated that there are a range of potential problems with emotional intelligence. Accordingly, the concepts involved need to be engaged with cautiously and critically. A central argument developed in this paper is that the tendency, in writings on emotional intelligence, to take the 'individual' and the 'mind' as units of analysis might lead to a neglect of social factors and collective dynamics. Existing emotional intelligence assessment methodologies, which assess individuals as isolated entities, might therefore elucidate only partial, potentially misleading, findings. The work of researchers such as the Geneva group, with its emphasis on measuring emotional *climate*, might signal a way of moving beyond this dilemma. Indeed, a measure of *collective* emotional intelligence would be, to return to a central theme in this paper, of great value to the practitioner who is interested in developing *collective* learning.

Ultimately, the impact of the ideas relating to emotional intelligence will be determined by their application in the work of human resource development practitioners. To finish with a final anecdote, a woman working for a large computer company in London recently recalled to me an incident with her manager. She was aware that the manager had attended a seminar on emotional intelligence, and was interested in applying the ideas. He called a meeting of employees within the section of the organisation for which he was responsible, the central message of this meeting was clear "If you're not having fun, don't bother coming to work…". Her initial reaction was "Great, I don't have to come to work"! Again, I provide this here as an example of the dangers of applying only the rhetoric of emotional intelligence without really understanding the underlying principles.

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